

# A MESSAGE FROM THE NAVY SURGEON GENERAL: HONOR YOUR OATH

*The following message was sent by Navy Surgeon General Vice Adm. Forrest Faison to Navy Medicine commanders world-wide.*

I want to echo Chief of Naval Operations Admiral John Richardson's message about the recent discovery of online sites degrading service members — we have a problem. We must, at every level of the leadership chain, send a clear message that this behavior is unacceptable. We will not under any circumstance tolerate this from members of the Navy Medicine team, nor will we allow people who engage in this behavior to remain on our team.

This issue is especially critical to Navy Medicine. We are entrusted with the lives and well-being of those who have volunteered to defend our freedom.

We are committed to providing them the best care our nation can offer. In turn, we honor them with our unqualified respect, care, and compassion. If any member of the Navy Medicine team participates in online activities which degrade others in uniform, they are degrading those we are trusted to serve. I will not, repeat, will not, tolerate this behavior and will aggressively take appropriate judicial and administrative action against any member of the Navy Medicine team who engages in this behavior. This behavior violates the oath we took when we joined this team, whether it was the Corpsman Pledge, the Hippocratic Oath, or the Oath of Office. It also violates two expectations I have made clear from day one: be worthy of the trust placed in our hands and be worthy of the 'uniform' we wear. There is no place on our team for anyone who violates their oath or disregards my expectations.

Nearly 23% of Navy corpsmen and 40% of our medical department officers are women. Not only are they providers, they are our shipmates, our friends and our family. We must treat each other, regardless of gender, with respect and decency at ALL times. We need to take a stand every time we witness disrespectful behavior – both in public and in private. It's imperative we hold each other accountable — ALWAYS.

This behavior won't be cured by email, mass stand downs, or all hands calls. This issue will be cured by engaged leadership, starting at the deck plate, with every member setting clear expectations that we will not tolerate this behavior and there will be no second chances.

I am directing within one week that personal contact occur at every level of the chain of command so that every member of the Navy Medicine team will be made aware of the CNO's message, his expectations, my expectations, and the immediate consequences for non-compliance.



*Official U.S. Navy photo*

This is a core value, credibility, and trust issue for Navy Medicine. It gets to the heart of who we are as a Navy and as a Navy Medicine team. There is no place for this behavior on our team and no room whatsoever for compromise. Those who cannot honor their oath or the directives of senior leadership cannot be trusted on the battlefield and cannot be trusted with the lives of those entrusted to us. They have no place on a team of honor, of service, caring, and compassion that is Navy Medicine. I expect each of you to honor your oaths, honor the trust placed in your hands, and honor the uniform you wear. I am so incredibly proud of every member of the Navy Medicine team that I will not blemish your honor or your legacy by allowing those who are not worthy of our team to remain. Your sacrifice and service is too important, too distinguished, and too honorable to allow those who would blemish it to serve alongside you.

SG sends